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FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1433
INFO RUEHZG/NATO EU COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHMEP/THE MIDDLE EAST PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVE PRIORITY
RUEHLB/AMEMBASSY BEIRUT PRIORITY 0215
RUEHDM/AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY 0286
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 0313

C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 000369

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DEPT ALSO FOR NEA/ELA ANN SOMERSET; BEIRUT ALSO FOR SUSANNE ROSE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/10/2018
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [PREF](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [MASS](#) [PARM](#) [SY](#) [IS](#) [LE](#)
GR
SUBJECT: LEBANON: GREECE UNLIKELY TO ATTEND MARCH 14 BEIRUT CONFERENCE

REF: STATE 24262

Classified By: A/Political Counselor Jeff Hovenier for 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) A/Political Counselor delivered reftel points on encouraging attendance at the March 14, 2008 convention in Beirut to Georgos Ayfantis, Deputy Director of the MFA A6 Directorate for Arab Countries and the Middle East. Ayfantis said Athens was unaware of the convention, but after hearing that it would be hosted by the March 14 political movement he said, "I doubt we will go."

¶2. (C) Ayfantis said Greece is trying to maintain a "balance" in its relations with the March 14 movement and the Hizballah-led opposition, as it believes representatives of both groups will be needed to form a "national unity government." As a result, Greece tends not to participate in events called by either side. Greece has no objections with the agenda of the March 14 movement, but finds the agenda and rhetoric from the Hizballah-led opposition to be "unacceptable." Ayfantis took pains to reiterate that Greece's position is "one of practicality." If it were to attend events organized by the March 14 movement, it would feel obliged also to attend events organized by the Hizballah-led opposition -- which Greece cannot countenance. A/Political Counselor responded that it is difficult to understand why Greece should feel that it would need to "balance" attendance at an event organized to promote democracy, freedom, and sovereignty with attendance at events organized by forces of instability and terror. Ayfantis concluded by noting that he would inform the Greek Ambassador in Beirut of the "U.S. suggestion," adding that "ultimately it will be the Ambassador's decision whether to attend."
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